Technology in Rural Transportation

A recent study documented more than eighty proven, cost-effective, "low-tech" solutions to rural transportation needs, most developed or implemented by local transportation professionals. One of these solutions is outlined below:

Learn all about the simple solutions on the Internet at http://inform.enterprise.prog.org

The simple solutions report is available from Hau To at (503) 892-2533, or email: to@crc-corp.com

Community-Friendly Rail Warning System

Overall goal:	To improve the quality of life of residents living near rail crossings, while ensuring that a new warning system would not adversely effect the safety of the crossings.
Technical approach:	The automated horn system provides a similar audible warning to motorists and pedestrians by using two stationary horns mounted at the crossing. Each horn directs its sound toward the approaching roadway. The horn system is activated using the same track signal circuitry as the gate arms and bells located at the crossing. Once the horn is activated, a strobe light begins flashing to inform the locomotive engineer that the horn is working. If the strobe light is not flashing, or the locomotive engineer has a reason for concern regarding safety at the crossing, the engineer simply sounds the train horn.
Current status:	Three intersections have been outfitted with the automated horns.
Location / geographic scope:	Automated train horns were originally installed in Ames, Iowa. As a result of its success, additional horns have been installed in Gering, Nebraska and Parsons, Kansas.
Agencies involved:	Iowa DOT.
Cost information:	Each system cost approximately $20,000, not including installation.
Key contacts:	Steve Gent, 515.239.1129 or Scott Logan, 515.239.5275.
Have goals been achieved?	Based on surveys gathered from residents, engineers and motorists, the automated horns appear to have achieved the goal of being less disruptive without compromising crossing safety.
Solution timeline:	This project was undertaken in 1998.

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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